

Message Text

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CINCEUR

S E C R E T SANAA 0208

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE, SA

SUBJECT: NEW YAR CABINET

REF: SANAA 0192

1. SUMMARY: NEW CABINET APPOINTED JAN 25 YOUNG, PRAGMATIC, MODERATE, MORE HONEST, COMPETENT, PRO-AMERICAN, MODERNIST. ASNAG RETURNS TO FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH MANY PRO-HAMDI COLLEAGUES IN CABINET. KEY DEVELOPMENT FIGURES REMAIN IN TREASURY AND DEVELOPMENT. LEFTIST MINED REPLACED BY HARD-WORKING ADMINISTRATOR. BAATHI SUPPORTERS OF AYN I OUT. SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PRO-AMERICAN APPOINTEES IN KEY POSTS, INCLUDING PRIMIN AND HIS TWO DEPUTIES. PUBLIC IMAGE GOOD AND GENERAL HOPE CABINET WILL NOT BE SHORT-LIVED. WE HOPE SAG WILL NOT CONTINUE PRESS FOR CONSERVATIVE CABINET WHICH WOULD BE UNPROGRESSIVE, UNREPRESENTATIVE AND LIKELY FAN HOSTILITY TOWARD SAG.

2. NEW CABINET UNDER PRIMIN ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI WAS

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APPOINTED JAN 25 BY PRESIDENT HAMDI AND SWORN IN

JAN 26. CABINET COMPARED WITH PREDECESSOR IS A WHOLE YOUNGER (AVERAGE LATE THIRTIES), MORE COMPETENT, MORE HONEST, AND MORE DYNAMIC. TWO-THIRDS ARE ZAYDIS, ALTHOUGH PRIMIN IS SHAF'A'I. BAATHI SUPPORTERS OF AYNI OUT (EX-MINECON AND EX-MINSUPPLY STILL IN JAIL). KEY DEVELOPMENT FIGURES MINDEVEL. IRYANI AND MINFIN JUNAID REMAIN BUT ARE STRENGTHENED BY TALENTS OF PRIMIN. APPOINTMENT OF HARD-WORKING MAQDAMI AS MINED VICE RATHER CORRUPT AND AMBITIOUS AFIF IS DEFINITE PLUS, AS IS ADDITION OF MINPUB WORKS KHURSHAMI, MINECON AL-THAWR, AND MINHEALTH ABDALLAH.

3. KEY CHANGE IS RETURN OF ABDALLAH AL-ASNAG TO MFA POST, AFTER EXILE TO COMMUNICATIONS BY POLITICAL ENEMY FORMER PRIMIN AYNI. IT ONLY MILD EXAGGERATION TO SPEAK OF "ASNAG CABINET" SINCE HE VERY CLOSE TO HAMDI, AS WELL AS COLLEAGUES MINSTATE SA'ID, DEPPRIMIN BARAKAT, AND MINSUPPLY HAKIMI. IN ADDITION HE FRIENDLY WITH PRIMIN ABD AL-GHANI WHOM HE MAY OUTSHINE, ALTHOUGH ASNAG AS ADENI IS SENSITIVE TO POSSIBLE DANGER OF JEALOUSY OF NORTH YEMENIS.

4. ORIENTATION OF CABINET IS PRAGMATIC, PRO-WESTERN, AND MODERATE. IT IS LARGELY TECHNOCRAT IN SENSE OF GENERAL COMPETENCE BUT IS NOT CAST OF POLITICAL UNKNOWN. AMONG THOSE DISTINCTLY FAVORABLE TO U.S. AND WITH WHOM WE HAVE GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS WE COUNT ABD AL-GHANI, GEGHMAN, BARAKAT, ASNAG, SA'ID, IRYANI, JUNAYD, NADHIR, AND MAQDAMI. MOREOVER THIS ELEMENT IS NOW IN ASCENDANCY RATHER THAN PERSONALLY-FRIENDLY BUT POLITICALLY-HOSTILE AYNI FACTION.

5. THIS BEING THIRD CABINET APPOINTED IN ELEVEN MONTHS, THERE IS STRONG POPULAR DESIRE THAN THIS CABINET REMAIN IN OFFICE FOR SOME TIME RATHER THAN ONLY FEW MONTHS UNTIL CIVILIAN EXECUTIVE RESORED. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON ATTITUDE OF SAG. IF IT CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR CONSERVATIVE-DOMINATED REGIME, IT WILL MOST LIKELY END UP WITH UNPROGRESSIVE, UNREPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT THAT YEMENIS WILL VIEW AS PUPPET REGIME AND WHICH WILL BE FOCAL POINT FOR A GROWING YEMEN HOSPITALITY TOWARD SAG. WE WOULD HOPE THAT DISMISSAL OF AYNI WITH BAATHI MINISTERS, PLUS DECLINE SINAN ABU LUHUM, WOULD CONVINCE SAG TO LEND SUPPORT TO PRESENT CABINET AND TO CONTINUE SUPPORT PRESIDENT HAMDI

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IN COOPERATION WITH ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT SHAIKH ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR.

6. FOLLOWING IS LIST IN ORDER ANNOUNCED WITH FORMER POST SHOWN IN PARENTHESES.

A. ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI-PRIME MINISTER (GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL BANK). HONEST COMPETENT NON-POLITICAL ECONOMIST. AMERICAN M.A. (UNIV. COLORADO 1962)

B. LTC YAHYA AL-MUTAWAKKIL, MEMBER OF COMMAND COUNCIL-INTERIOR (INCUMBENT). HAS IN PAST SHOWED SYMPATHIES TO OUSTED AYNI-ABU LUHUM FACTION BUT MOVING BACK TO HAMDI'S SIDE RECENTLY.

C. YAHYA GEGHAM-DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (FOREIGN MINISTER)-MOVED UPSTAIRS TO LESS POWERFUL POST TO MAKE ROOM FOR MORE DYNAMIC ASNAG.

D. ABDALLAH HASAN BARAKAT-DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (MINISTER FOR LABOR, YOUTH, AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS). UNTIL SIX MONTHS AGO AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA. DYNAMIC, PRO-AMERICAN. STRONG PERSONALITY WHO AS MIN INT PUBLICLY EXECUTED "FIFTH-COLUMNIST" DURING DECEMBER 1967 ROYALIST SIEGE OF SANAA.

E. ABDALLAH AL-KHURSHAMI-PUBLIC WORKS (HEAD OF HIGHWAY AUTHORITY). HARD-WORKING, HONEST ENGINEER. WAS BRIEFLY TECHNOCRAT PRIMIN IN 1969.

F. ABD AL-LATIF DAYFALLAH-COMMUNICATIONS (PUBLIC WORKS). HAS SERVED IN CABINETS SINCE REVOLUTION. UN-DISTINGUISHED, UN-ENERGETIC EX-MILITARY OFFICER WITH SOME LEFTIST SYMPATHIES.

G. AHMAD ABDU SA'ID-MINISTER OF STATE (MINISTER OF STATE FOR SERVICES): CABINET'S PERENNIAL "UTILITY INFIELDER". HIGHLY POLITICAL, PRO-AMERICAN. CLOSE TO HAMDI AND VERY CLOSE TO ASNAG.

H. MUHAMMAD AL-JUNAYD-FINANCE (INCUMBENT. COMPETENT, HIGHLY RESPECTED TECHNOCRAT, YAR'S LINK TO IMF.

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I. ABD AL-KARIM AL-'ANSI-MINISTER OF STATE (INCUMBENT). CORRUPT FORMER MINJUSTICE. INSIGNIFICANT POST.

J. ABD AL-MALIK AL-TAYYIB-LOCAL ADMINISTRATION (INCUMBENT). SAUDI-ORIENTED CONSERVATIVE, BELIEVED MUSLIM BROTHER.

K. ALI LUTF AL-THAWR-ECONOMY (CHAIRMAN OF YEMEN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT). ECONOMIST WHO HAS DONE EXCELLENT JOB AT BANK. PROBABLY SLIGHT LEFTIST SYMPATHIES.

L. ABDALLAH AL-ASNAG-FOREIGN AFFAIRS (COMMUNICATIONS). EXPERIENCED, PRAGMATIC AND DYNAMIC. PRO-WESTERN AND PRO-AMERICAN. VERY CLOST TO PRESIDENT HAMDI. LEADER OF ADENI EXILE COMMUNITY.

M. AHMAD QASIM DAHMASH-INFORMATION (INCUMBENT), CORRUPT AND

NOT VERY EFFECTIVE. BELIEVED TO BE HAMDI'S BROTHER-IN-LAW.

N. ABD AL-KARIM AL-IRYANI-DEVELOPMENT (MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEVELOPMENT). ALSO HEAD OF CENTRAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION. WITH SLIGHT TITLE CHANGE IS NOW MINISTER WITH PORTFOLIO. EXTREMELY COMPETENT, KEY FIGURE IN DEVELOPMENT. CLOSE TIES TO WORLD BANK.

O. ALI AL-SAMMAN-JUSTICE (INCUMBENT). NOTORIOUSLY CORRUPT.

P. SALAH AL-MASRI-MINISTER OF STATE (INCUMBENT). TOKEN ROYALIST IN POSITION WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.

Q. AMIN ABU RAS-MINISTER OF STATE (INCUMBENT). PARAMOUNT SHAIKH OF BAKIL CONFEDERATION. POWERLESS ALCOHOLIC. TOKEN APPOINTMENT.

R. HUSAYN AL-MAQDAMI-EDUCATION (CHAIRMAN YEMEN PETROLEUM COMPANY), FORMER MINHEALTH. STRONG ADMINISTRATOR WHO HAS RAPIDLY BUILT UP PETROLEUM COMPANY DESPITE SEVERE PROBLEMS OF COST AND AVAILABILITY OF FUEL.

S. MUHAMMAD LUTF AL-SABAHI-RELIGIOUS TRUSTS (NEW TO CABINET). REPLACES CORRUPT TRIBAL SHIKH.

T. SA'ID MUHAMMAD AL-HADIMI-SUPPLY (OUT OF CABINET). WAS MINSUPPLY IN 1973 HAJRI CABINET AND EARLIER GOVERNOR OF TAIZ. WELL
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REGARDED, CLOSE TO ASNAG.

U. MUTTAHAR AL-NADHIR-MUNICIPALITIES (HEAD OF TAIZ COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION). WAS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN MARCH 1974 MAKKI CABINET. YOUNG COMPETENT ENGINEER, FORMERLY WITH UNDP.

V. DR. ABD AL-MALIK ABDALLAH-HEALTH (DIRECTOR TAIZ HEALTH OFFICE). HARD-WORKING, HONEST ADMINISTRATOR.

W. ABDALLAH HUSAYN AL-HILALI-SOCIAL, LABOR, AND YOUTH AFFAIRS. (SECGEN CONFEDERATION YEMENI DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS. DYNAMIC, CLOSE TO HAMDI BUT NOT TOO HONEST. EMBASSY CHANCERY LANDLORD.

X. MUHAMMAD AL-KHADIM AL-WAJIH-AGRICULTURE (NEW TO GOVERNMENT). HODEIDA MERCHANT AND LANDOWNER.

7. FOLLOWING EXTRA-MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCED
SIMULTANEOUSLY.

A. AMIN ABD AL-WASI' NU'MAN-ADVISER TO PRIMIN FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ELDERLY EX-GOVERNOR OF TAIZ AND MORE RECENTLY SANAA. A SENIOR MEMBER OF NU'MAN FAMILY CLOSE TO PRIMIN.

B. MUHAMMAD QA'ID AL-AGHBARI-ADVISER TO PRIMIN FOR
HEALTH AFFAIRS. HE AND MINHEALTH ARE FROM SAME REGION AS
PRIMIN (AGHBAR IN HUIARIYA).

8. FURTHER APPOINTMENT WE UNDERSTAND FROM RELIABLE SOURCE
DUE TO BE MADE IMMINENTLY IS MUHAMMAD SALIM BASINDWA AS
POLITICAL ADVISER TO PRESIDENT. BASINDWA IS ASNAG'S RIGHT-
HAND MAN IN ADENI COMMUNITY AND IS DUE TO DEPART OF CU GRANT TO
U.S. IN MAY.
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